

50 JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILISATION

who took a particularly prominent part in this activity, working in collaboration with such men as Plato of Tivoli. No mediaeval translator, with the exception of the indefatigable Gerard of Cremona, produced a greater bulk of work. He translated Avicenna, al-Gazali and 'Avicebron' among the philosophers, as well as many works in all branches of science. He was responsible for the introduction to Europe of the *Secretum Secretorum* ascribed to Aristotle—one of the most popular works of the Middle Ages, which has not entirely lost its vogue even to-day. He may be said, indeed, to have provided a large proportion of the scientific equipment of the average mediaeval library.

Similarly, in astronomy, the Jews played a most important role in transferring the Arabic knowledge of the stars, and Graeco-Arabic astronomy in general, from Islam to Christendom: and all the more important astronomical tables of the Middle Ages were either translated or compiled with Jewish aid. This, as we shall see, was to be of the utmost importance for its bearing upon the progress of maritime exploration. It was John of Seville who translated into Latin the works of al-Battani and al-Parghani, the two chief Arabic writers on astronomy. The latter, under the name Alfergano, is cited by Dante: various passages in the *Convito* and the *Vita Nuova* are based upon his theories. Al-Kindi's treatise of the Stations of the Moon was translated for Robert of Anjou by

Kalonymus ben
Kalonymus ("Maestro Calo "). Al-Heitham's
astronomical
compendium was translated from Arabic
into Spanish
by a Jew named Abraham at the request of
Alfonso X;
Jacob ben Makhir translated al-Hazen's
Astronomy, and
the works of Autolycus and Menelaus on the
Sphere.

While working at the court of Frederick
II, Jacob
Anatoli (who has been mentioned above),
came into